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This document contains testimony presented at the public hearings of the New York City Commission on Human Rights. The hearings of this commission focused on two problem areas--decentralization and teacher training, and curriculum. The burning issues of anti-Semitism and black or white racism in the schools were concerns of a special investigatory committee appointed by the mayor and are only occasionally mentioned in these hearings. Witnesses included professors from schools of education, labor union officials, teachers from various areas in the city, representatives of community, civil rights, and religious organizations, and some private citizens. (NH)

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C R I S I S

A Report on Decentralization, Teacher Training
and Curriculum in the New York City
Public Schools

Testimony Received by the New York City
Commission on Human Rights
in Public Hearings

December, 1968

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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John V. Lindsay
Mayor

William H. Booth
Chairman

UD 007 856

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction.....	i
 First Day	
Dr. John H. Niemeyer.....	1
Ira Glasser, Esq.....	2
David Livingston.....	3
 Second Day	
Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington.....	4
Arthur J. Levine.....	4
Rev. Calvin O. Pressley.....	5
Natalie Payne.....	6
Luis Nunez.....	7
Keith Baird.....	8
Rev. William S. Van Meter.....	8
Dr. Philip Harris.....	9
 Third Day	
Victor Gotbaum.....	11
Lenore Vigdor.....	12
Dr. Irving Gladstone.....	12
Lorraine W. Addelston.....	13
Murray Rockowitz.....	14
Jack Zuckerman.....	15
David S. Seely.....	16
Wendy Lehrman.....	17
Fran Morrill.....	18
 Fourth Day	
William Loren Katz.....	20
Honorable James Scheuer.....	21
Dr. Edmund H. Gordon.....	22
Glynova Howe.....	23
Zephrira Bauman.....	23
Robert Couche.....	24
David Weiner.....	25

C O N T E N T S (Continued)

Page

Fifth Day

Dr. Sol Gordon	26
Rabbi Daniel L. Davis	27
Ellen Lurie	28
Blanche Lewis	29
Dr. Burton Zwiebach	30
Maurice J. Goldbloom	31

Sixth Day

Rosalie Stutz	32
John J. O'Neill	32
Simon Beagle	33

Seventh Day

Dr. John Morsell	35
Elliot Shapiro	36
Dr. David Rogers	37
Pam Levin	39
Vine Deloria, Jr. (Carla Blakey)	40
Ralph King	40
Dr. June Nash	42
Bernice L. Cornyetz	42
Peter Steinberg	43

Eighth Day

Herbert Kahn	45
Don Weyne	45
Olver Ramsey (Lisa Liebert)	46
Martha B. Bernard	48
Emanuel Muravchic	48
Lloyd S. Mapp	49
Jeffrey Mackler	50
Gretchen Mackler	51
Rose Claire Jones	51

Ninth Day

Dr. Ruth Radvany	52
Jerry Latzky	53
Roderick MacKenzie	53

C O N T E N T S (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Dr. Max Wolff	54
John M. Lawrence	55
Arnold Webb	56
Harold Dicks	58
Dr. Daniel Dodson.	58
Joseph Harris (Mrs. Elizabeth Pendler)	61
Peter Reilly	61

Tenth Day

Marcus Tenner	63
Rev. C. Herbert Oliver	64
Dr. Abraham Duker	64
Mary Montgomery	65
Albert Shanker	65

Eleventh Day

David A. Schulte (Morris S. Sass)	68
---	----

INTRODUCTION

The City Commission on Human Rights has long been concerned with the inequality of educational opportunity found in the New York City public school system.

Recent attention has centered on the proposed decentralization of New York City schools as a possible means of improving education, particularly in the Negro and Puerto Rican communities. The Commission held closed hearings in February and March of 1968 on the operation of the three decentralized demonstration projects. The public hearings just concluded are corollary to the Commission's continued quest for equal educational opportunity.

This public hearing was organized in conjunction with the investigatory work of the special committee appointed by Mayor John V. Lindsay and headed by Justice Bernard Botein. Justice Botein's committee was assigned to investigate charges of anti-Semitism and other forms of black or white racism and group tensions in the schools. The Commission's hearings focused on two other problems areas - Decentralization and Teacher Training, Curriculum.

Within these two broad areas such topics were explored as: degrees of community participation and control; accountability of the school system to the community; due process; desegregation; administrative responsibilities of a central board; course content; correction and updating of textbooks; teacher attitudes; recruitment and training of teachers of all racial or ethnic backgrounds; and other related problems.

The hearings were held at the Ethical Culture Society Hall in Manhattan, beginning on Monday, December 2, 1968, and continued daily through Friday, December 13, 1968. Additional testimony was taken at the offices of the Commission on Tuesday, December 24, 1968.

In the interest of expediting this interim report considerable liberties were taken in condensing each witness' testimony. A comprehensive final report is in preparation and will be available in the near future. The full narrative transcript of all testimony is on file at the offices of the Commission.

FIRST DAY _ DECEMBER 2, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

William H. Booth, Chairman
David H. Litter, Vice Chairman
Eleanor Clark French
Rabbi Harry Halpern
Dorothy Hart Hirshon
Jerome M. Kay
Theophilus Lewis
Juan Sanchez

Following opening remarks by Chairman Booth and a welcoming address by Algernon D. Black for the Ethical Culture Society, the following testimony was offered:

Witness

Dr. John H. Niemeyer, President, Bank Street College of Education

Parents of ghetto children want to control the educational process because the present system has failed to give their children an adequate education. Professional educators have not responded properly to the needs of alienated ghetto children because they have wrongly insisted that the children must be adapted to the educational process.

Two new approaches are necessary: a means of accountability must be established that will allow parents to hold the school system accountable for effectively educating their children and the educational staff must be taught how to teach children from a ghetto environment.

Parents should be able to exercise a general control over personnel and money. They should have a reasonable control necessary to give a broad direction to the educational process, but not absolute control.

New standards for teacher qualification are essential. Tenure rules must not freeze incompetents into the system.

If the educational process cannot be changed to meet the needs of society, the alternatives left to the communities are submission or rebellion.

Witness

Ira Glasser, Esq. Director, New York Civil Liberties Union

Integration has failed as the vehicle for accomplishing educational equality in New York City. Decentralization and community control have promise of achieving equal education results.

Pupil achievement is directly related to teacher attitudes which are in turn influenced by the degree of accountability the teachers feel toward the community. Community control of a generalized nature is necessary to accomplish teacher accountability.

The present position of the teachers' union may be greatly influenced by the threatened effect of community control upon the power relationships of both the teachers' union and the construction unions. Union resistance to the redistribution of power is reminiscent of management resistance 30 years ago.

Due process in teacher transfers never existed in the New York City system and therefore has not been violated.

Academic freedom should not be a problem under community control. The experience of the New York Civil Liberties Union indicates that academic freedom complaints would be more satisfactorily resolved under a decentralized system than

under the present bureaucratic morass.

The teacher selection system needs to be modified so that new standards, such as responsiveness to ghetto children, can be given a proper weight.

Witness

David Livingston, President Council 65, Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union

An integrated school system in New York City has always been foredoomed by sabotage within the system or by the hopeless conditions under which any project was launched.

Community control might indeed be a panacea in the sense that it gives the black community control over its destiny. Community rights can exist in harmony with teachers' rights. The labor movement must find ways by which it can recapture its past reputation as a vigorous proponent of human rights while at the same time protecting the basic trade unions rights of its members. The problem in negotiating 33 union contracts instead of one are not insurmountable.

Those groups and individuals entrenched in the present system feel that they are wrongfully being forced to give up hard won power and privilege should consider sharing power and responsibility with those who have been denied it. Our society has not yet reached the point where it is too concerned with the needs of Negroes and Puerto Ricans.

SECOND DAY - DECEMBER 3, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

William H. Booth, Chairman
David H. Litter, Vice Chairman
Murray Gross
Jerome M. Kay

Witness

Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington; Senior Minister, Community Church; Chairman, Coalition for Community Control; Chairman, Liberal Party

The right of a parent to be close to what is happening to his child is a human right. A form of community control is needed whereby representative citizens can oversee the administration of their schools by professional educators.

Teacher unionism is essential to the raising of professional standards and the improvement of pay scales. Community control does not of necessity conflict with teacher unionism.

Standards of due process should be made explicit for all parties, but it is also important that each community have a part in deciding the form that due process should take in particular circumstances.

Community boundaries should be the same as the present school districts, but further study might show that ideal communities should have coterminous boundaries for all governmental, service and social functions.

Witness

Arthur J. Levine, National Treasurer of the United Synagogues of America

Bigotry and racism should not be relevant to issues concerning education but have been made relevant because parties

on all sides have directly or by silent approval indicated its relevance. The present school crisis was not precipitated by racism but by the failure of the central board to give adequate guidelines to the local board or to properly define due process requirements.

The United Synagogues of America favor decentralization. Lay members of the community could be permitted to control the distribution of money in accordance with budgetary guidelines, but most budget problems should be handled by professionals. Lay members might be unable to choose proper curricula and textbooks without professional guidance.

Under decentralization, with parents participating in the school process, the schools might improve the social orientation of children in lower income areas, but efforts should be directed primarily toward changing the child's environment.

Although integration efforts have appeared to fail in New York City, there is room for a combination of approaches not excluding integration. High schools should be eliminated from community control in order to permit a "leavening effect."

Witness

Rev. Calvin O. Pressley, New York Mission Society; Chairman
Interfaith Committee of the War Against Poverty

Black people have become thoroughly frustrated over the inability of present officials to achieve quality education and need, through decentralization, to have in their own hands the power to cope with what appears to be a conspiracy of impotency. The present conflict at Ocean Hill-Brownsville is

primarily a fight over a change of power.

Teachers need to understand the environmental and economic milieu of minority children. This kind of understanding can be taught along with other technical subjects. Teacher attitudes can be evaluated within traditional standards of due process. Teacher performance would be improved if parents with authority were looking over the shoulders of teachers. Qualified black teachers who have been excluded in the past should be recruited.

The acceptance of decentralization does not imply rejection of integration, but integration of itself is not as high on the present hierarchy of needs as hunger, jobs, education and other daily necessities. Decentralization would raise community interest in education.

There are many community people who have had experience in the administration of anti-poverty money and programs. The expense of giving experience to untrained people or the expense of mistakes of inexperience are a necessary part of this kind of program. Even with an experienced staff the Board of Education can be criticized for much waste and inefficiency.

Local school boards should include the broadest possible representation, including students.

Witness

Natalie Payne, Library Teacher at Haaren High School, Manhattan

Most teachers at Haaren High School, where 85% of the students are Negro or Puerto Rican, have an unsympathetic attitude toward the students and openly show favoritism to the

white minority.

Teachers encourage class-cutting by not reporting absences and by not treating the matter as serious. Parents are discouraged from becoming involved with school affairs by the hostility shown to them by teachers and principals.

Teachers should be entitled to rights of tenure but some means must be devised for transferring non-sympathetic teachers.

Witness

Luis Nunez, Executive Director of ASPIRA, inc.

Decentralization and the maximum feasible participation of parents is necessary to correcting the ills of the New York City educational system. Representation on local school boards should bear some relationship to the racial or ethnic makeup of the school district.

Teachers should have an interest in the students they teach. Genuine efforts should be made to hire more Puerto Rican teachers. Present efforts are not adequate and appear designed only to appease the community. Present standards for teacher qualification should be flexible enough that Negro and Puerto Rican teachers will not be excluded because of "accents" or strict technicalities.

A decentralized system which can tie the teacher and principal closer to the parents would help to offset the non-concern of an absentee civil service teaching staff securely earning more money than 99% of the parents.

Witness

Keith E. Baird, Director of Afro-American and Latin American Studies at OceanHill-Brownsville

"Decentralization" is an administrative attempt to break up a monolithic structure into smaller, more manageable units. "Community Control" is the right and power of the community to make meaningful decisions about the education of its children. Community control offers a means by which the schools can help community children overcome the disadvantages imposed by American society. The local board and the community, by feeling adequate to cope with their own circumstances, will convey this feeling to the children able to see people like himself in positions of importance and influence.

The distortions of Afro-American and Latin American heritage, resulting from the European conceived intellectual universe which has dominated United States thought, must be corrected by a State Board of Regents mandate requiring Afro-American and Latin American courses in all schools. Local boards should be free to enhance these studies such as by offering courses in Swahili.

The New York City Board of Education and the Board of Examiners should be abolished. Centralized minimum standards should be administered on a statewide level.

Witness

Rev. William S. Van Meter, Executive Secretary, Department of Christian Social Relations, Protestant Council of the City of New York

The Protestant Council approves of the concepts of decentralization and community control in conjunction with proper

safeguards for teacher tenure and city-wide collective bargaining. There should be 30 or 40 districts in New York City. Political boundaries should not be followed because they lack homogeneity and rationality.

Community control puts an important variable into the system which could increase accountability to the community.

Not enough concern is given to the problem of eliminating incompetent teachers. During the past five years only 12 teachers have been dismissed for cause. One church group has discharged more clergy than this for cause in one year.

The primary goal is not integration but equality. The distribution of black people throughout a white population may not be the means of accomplishing equality.

The Board of Examiners, perhaps important in the days of the spoils system, no longer serves a purpose. Standards are adequately administered by the State.

Witness

Dr. Philip Harris, Baruch College, City University of New York

Sound principles of management were ignored by the Board of Education in establishing the OceanHill-Brownsville demonstration district. The Board of Education, with years of managerial experience and administrators well seasoned in the functioning of the school system, issued such a vague delegation of authority to the local board that crisis and conflict were inevitable. Teachers were made responsible to someone

outside the district thereby permitting those seeking to render decentralization ineffective to continue to do so. The unit administrator was not given the freedom to function effectively, making "decentralization" and "experiment" part of an unkind myth.

"Success" in integrating white schools has been dismal. The one remaining hope is for the ghetto community to control the environment in its schools - schools that rightfully must be considered theirs because of the very student enrollment.

Decentralization, when properly understood, is not a threat to the existence of unions and will yeild more meaningful unionism.

If the white backlash is allowed to stifle the aspirations of black parents for quality education for their children, disaster for white as well as for black may well be invited.

THIRD DAY - DECEMBER 4, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

William H. Booth, Chairman
Eleanor Clark French
Theophilus Lewis

Witness

Victor Gotbaum, Executive Director, District Council 37,
American Federation of State, County and Municipal
Employees Union

District Council 37 was the first union to come out in favor of decentralization and community control. Decentralization, however, will transfer great responsibilities to the community and some of the most compelling problems should be anticipated.

The local boards will be faced with the making of very intelligent fiscal decisions involving the trimming and distribution of costs to conform to the scarcity of available dollars.

The local boards will have to devise ways to attract and hire more Negro and Puerto Rican teachers and administrators.

Paraprofessionals must be integrated into the school system so that black and Puerto Rican school aides can feel they are participating in the educational process and so that teachers will receive meaningful assistance.

Communities must develop the professional expertise and know-how needed to deal with unions, teachers and other problem situations.

Local boards should have the right to hire and fire teachers but should recognize union grievance procedures and protection.

The Central Labor Council does not oppose the position taken by District Council 37.

Witness

Lenore Vigdor, Private Citizen

No one ever speaks at public hearings for the person who is not a parent, not a teacher, not a member of any organized group, but who is just a taxpayer.

People other than parents and teachers should be considered as members of the community which controls the schools. All citizens have a legitimate concern about the functioning of the school system because our entire society is at stake. The schools must be accountable to the entire community.

Witness

Dr. Irving A. Gladstone, Executive Director, Council of Supervisory Associations of the Public Schools of New York City

The Council of Supervisory Associations represents 14 affiliated associations composed of 4,000 supervisors in New York City.

The CSA wants community support and favors community participation but opposes community control as it has been experienced in the past few years. Many members of CSA have been harassed and intimidated at their jobs by people advocating community control.

The association is in favor of decentralization when decentralization results in the professional people, teachers and supervisors, being given an opportunity to do the best job possible in behalf of the children.

Witness

Mrs. Lorraine W. Addelston, President, Jr. High School Principals Association; Principal, Eleanor Roosevelt Jr. High School

The Mayor has rushed the city into social polarization by decentralization and community control. The planning committee of I.S. 10 is presently plotting to overthrow the local school board and replace it with an all-black board. Local boards throughout the city are promoting rebellion. Parents must learn to control themselves before they can hope to control others.

Community control may violate Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission laws and integration guidelines. Decentralization encourages segregation. The direction seems to be toward apartheid rather than integration. Admittedly, progress toward integration has been slow by the Board of Education. Busing is not the answer and neither is separation. Schools should not have been built where the population is segregated.

Equality cannot be "given" to people. People can be helped to achieve supervisory positions, but if they are not fully prepared through experience, they cannot handle the job properly. Competitive examinations are the fairest way

to select supervisors.

"If decentralization means more efficient educational administration, I am for it. If community control means community self-control, and if it means high standards for community leadership and community responsibility, I support it."

Witness

Murray Rockowitz, Member, Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners has served for over 70 years to keep political patronage and unsound pressures away from the selection of teachers and supervisors. This has been accomplished by a merit system consisting basically of openly announced examinations, professionally determined standards, professionally established passmarks and other safeguards.

The Board of Examiners, which last year processed 85,000 applications, has improved its operations over the years by streamlining test administration, eliminating the separate oral English examination, rating speech as only one of four factors in the interview test and processing tests more rapidly. Certain timeless minima, such as FBI checks and physical fitness, are not required under state certification, so it is important that the Board of Examiners apply these standards.

Under decentralization a centrally functioning Board of Examiners is necessary to prevent experienced teachers and supervisors from gravitating to posh areas and the rest going to blighted areas. Although the percentage of Negro and

Puerto Rican teachers and supervisors do not reflect the actual student population but the number of minority group members entering our school system has been accelerating at a rapid pace. Absence of a baccalaureate degree, the minimum requirement, is largely the reason for the small number of minority group teachers.

Safeguards that once protected the Irish, the Italians and the Jews will also protect the Negro and Puerto Rican.

Witness

Jack Zuckerman, President, Association of Assistant Principals, Council of Supervisory Associations (Includes testimony given December 4th and December 9th)

Race and sex should not be a factor in the selection of principals. Recently a district superintendent in Queens circulated a letter asking 110 persons on a civil service list to waive their place to a person lower on the list who "truly cares about black children."

A strengthened merit system and a three year probationary period will get the best qualified people for the children of our city. Although some subjectively might enter into the opportunities for supervisory experience it does not prevent qualified persons from achieving positions in the system.

A good teacher should be able to teach all children and a qualified person should be able to be a principal in any school. If this does not prove to be so, then there is something wrong with the examination.

Decentralization would be helpful if it removed total

contact from the central bureaucracy and gave the district superintendents and principals more latitude. The communities might have some voice in the selection of language courses, for example, but ultimate decisions, such as selection of staff, should be left to the professionals.

Teachers should have an attitude that they are willing to teach all children to the best of their ability. With such an attitude the teacher can be trained to work effectively in any school with any children.

Witness

David S. Seely, Executive Director, Public Education Associations

Community control is the necessary first step toward restructuring an educational system which is permeated, like other institutions in our society, with resistance to equal opportunity for Negroes. Integration is of value only as an instrument for eliminating second class citizenship. Integration has failed within the bureaucracy of the Board of Education. A radical change of approach, including much more money, is needed to provide better education for everyone. Aroused local citizens are more likely to accomplish these changes. Expense, if measured against present waste and inefficiency, will be no greater under community control.

Changes not possible under the bureaucracy, but likely under community control include the recruitment of the new

generation of activist talent now on college campuses and revision of the education program so that courses emphasizing critical thought and English grammar can be given proper importance.

Community control has an intrinsic value in that community participation will help the youth to feel that school is a positive factor in their lives. At some point in the future, centralization might again have some merit if enough significant change can be brought about by community control.

Ocean Hill-Brownsville has not been a fair test of decentralization. But the taste of decentralization produced observable improvements in the attitudes of staff, parents and students.

Professional educators should have the attitude that their job is to educate children despite home and social environment problems. Community involvement will help in dealing with environmental problems.

Witness

Wendy Lehrman, Chairman, Jewish Teachers for Community Control; Elementary School Teacher

The inferiority of the present school system has been excused on such grounds as "disruptive children" and "cultural deprivation" and now "incompetent teachers" when in fact children, teachers and parents have been rendered powerless by the educational system and the teachers union. Both are too highly centralized to permit those within to affect decisions. The structure is demoralizing. By its nature it enhances the self-doubt of teachers and makes them fear

criticism.

African culture courses and language enrichment programs are not enough. Lower class black and Puerto Rican children possess a linguistic intelligence which is denied by the school professionals who insist upon replacing it with the traditional school pap which reflects their own kind of intelligence. The children get the message and will not learn.

Teachers must advocate first-rate education along with their wage and security demands. Both teachers and parents must have a voice in the system so that the needs of the children can properly be met.

Witness

Fran Morrill, Secretary, Jewish Teachers for Community Control

Black children become convinced that their teachers are racists by their acts and attitudes. Human relations courses, supported by the teachers union, would help. Teachers must have a desire to do an effective job. "Experience" is not a relevant criteria of teacher attitude. Attitude is a subjective factor.

Integrated teaching staffs are necessary, even in segregated schools, in order to demonstrate to children that white and black people can work together for the same ends.

Most teachers are ordinary people. Community control may not change the basic competence of teachers but can make them perform to the best of their ability. Community control

is the only way to organize local interest so that necessary changes can be effected in the way their children are taught.

FOURTH DAY-DECEMBER 5th, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

William H. Booth, Chairman
David H. Litter, Vice Chairman
Murray Gross
Rabbi Harry Halpern
Dorothy Hart Hirshon
Jerome M. Kay

Witness

William Loren Katz, Consultant on American Negro History to
the State Education Departments of New York and North
Carolina

Correcting the omission of black people from textbooks is important to the resolution of the current school crisis in New York City. There is no such thing as Negro History, but there is a common history of the United States which needs to have an accurate picture of the black contributions. History courses have been integrated to some extent, but vital areas such as the winning of the West and Reconstruction are still grossly distorted. New materials are badly needed in language, arts and literature.

The recognition that history has been distorted in the past and is loaded with myths should inspire white students as well as black students to learn new aspects of their history.

Special teacher training courses in integrated subjects will be necessary. Teachers were never taught these facts when they were in school. They must also learn how to integrate new materials and know the methodology for preparing the

material. Teacher attitudes will also be affected by their knowledge and respect for the role of black people in history.

The denial of the role of black men in history was intentional and has discouraged achievement among black students. Until there has been a satisfactory correction of the situation, educators should not turn down student requests for courses concentrating on Afro-American history.

Witness

Honorable James Scheuer, Member of Congress, 21st Congressional District, Bronx

Large numbers of low income citizens have shown that they believe the educational establishment is a middle class system, insensitive and irrelevant to the needs of the poor. One of the best ways to build bridges between the community and the school system is to employ thousands of low income people as teachers' aides (paraprofessionals) where they can interpret the goals and methods of the schools to their neighborhoods and can express the anxieties and concerns of the community to the education professionals.

The New Careers program of the Economic Opportunity Act might ideally provide career ladder opportunities for 57,000 paraprofessionals, one for every teacher in New York. At present only about 1,000 school aides are tied into career ladder programs which provide direct work with children. Most aides now function at the kindergarten level. Contributions could be made at all levels, including junior and senior high school. The Board of Education must expand its commitment

to this vital program.

Decentralization is necessary and the community must have control of the educational process.

Witness

Dr. Edmund H. Gordon, Professor of Education and Chairman,
Department of Guidance, Teachers College, Columbia
University

Numerous proposals for improving public education have been advanced in the past decade, mainly designed to eliminate or restructure the existing educational bureaucracy. The current reform struggle is confounded by several political and social issues as well as the conflicting interests of the different groups involved. Public officials are forced by minority group pressures to support decentralization while at the same time hoping to preserve their own authority in educational matters without offending middle class and majority ethnic coalitions which feel that they have much to lose.

Despite resistance to the decentralized approach to reform, at least four conditions to meaningful change must be met.

(1) The schools must be accountable to the parents for the children's educational achievements.

(2) The burden of responsibility for success or failure must be borne by the teacher and the school instead of the pupil.

(3) The education experience must be made more intellectually, emotionally and socially relevant to the main currents of the child's life.

(4) There must be some measure of economic and ethnic integration, although this may need to be temporarily sacrificed

in the interest of improved community development.

Decentralization is a viable administrative approach to the reform needed as well as a move toward the democratic structures which have long been regarded as bulwarks against autocracy and as the best vehicles for the advancement of human rights.

Witness

Glynova Howe, Director of Education, Catholic Interracial Council

The Catholic Interracial Council believes that opposition to community control has been wrongly polarized around the issue of racism and that the present impasse will continue unless this issue is removed from the picture. The Council favors decentralization and community control but believes the details cannot be worked out until there has been a cooling period. Decentralization should give teachers and parents an opportunity to understand one another better.

Witness

Zephrira Bauman, Chairman, Teachers for Community Control

Seeds of the present crisis were sown long ago by the discriminatory practices of the Board of Education. Despite studies and new programs there has been no progress. Teachers are told to "take the children where you find them and take them as far as you can." Today, with negative teacher attitudes and the lack of standards, few children fail to get promoted and little remedial work is given. Physical plant conditions and teacher ratios have worsened in ghetto schools.

One of the most promising developments in recent times

is the movement into the system of young teachers, usually active in civil rights in college, who have positive attitudes which greatly overshadow their lack of experience.

The United Federation of Teachers, the Council of Supervisory Associations and the Board of Education have formed an unholy alliance dedicated to protecting their self-interest and maintaining the status quo.

Community control is the only answer that ghetto communities have left to them for having a say about the kind of education their children receive. The schools must not be allowed to pass the buck for failing to educate the children from poor communities. If there is a gap in preparation the school must make up the gap.

Witness

Robert Couche, Member of Executive Board, Teachers for Community Control

From 40 to 55 non-striking teachers at Springfield Gardens High School continued to operate the school because of their commitment as educators and their felt obligation to the community. They were supported strongly by the black community which primarily was concerned only that their children be educated.

When the strike was over the principal refused to give the black children academic credit for the time they spent in class. This situation has reinforced the feeling of the students and their parents that no concern is given to the needs of the black community by the structures in power. This nonsense must cease.

Witness

David Weiner, Member of Executive Board, Teachers for
Community Control

Decentralization is possible with minimal or no community control. Community control requires a restructuring of the entire educational system so that the locus of power and control is shifted from the central board to the community boards. The extent of this control may vary considerably.

To give effect to community control the districts must be small enough to permit community effectiveness. Five borough-wide districts could not result in community control. Some special activities might be more effectively administered centrally, for example, schools for the physically handicapped and the deaf. Also the union might negotiate salaries and pensions on a city-wide basis while allowing for supplementary agreements in given communities.

Every effort at integration by the Board of Education since 1954 has failed completely. The Board did not really try to implement its own proposals. The effectiveness of educational parks remains to be seen since there is one under construction in the Bronx only. Massive improvement is needed in the schools with or without integration. There is no reason, however, why two or more local districts cannot agree to work cooperatively to achieve integration.

Teacher accountability and parental concern for the child's education are possible only with community control. Can we afford not to make the change?

FIFTH DAY - DECEMBER 6, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

Kenneth Drew
Eleanor Clark French
Murray Gross
Jerome M. Kay
Theophilus Lewis

Witness

Dr. Sol Gordon, Professor, Yeshiva University

Decentralization is an opportunity to solve our educational problems and not a solution.

At least one third of the children in New York City do not know how to read, write and do arithmetic at functional levels. The reading scores recently published are fabricated deceptive scores designed to give the appearance that children are being educated in ghetto schools. The decentralized districts will have to address themselves to this problem first and foremost. The solution must begin in the first grade where ghetto children are permitted to memorize their basal readers. Differential teaching methods must be used for those who have no reading readiness.

There is an urgent need for a massive program of in-service training for teachers so they can learn how to teach children those skills they failed to learn in the first grade.

Community and parent groups should become involved in decision making. We must decentralize our schools. The present bureaucracy has shown it is incapable of educating the children. Inefficiency and waste is incredible. Eighty per cent of the food is thrown out in some schools. There is no economy in centralized planning or purchase.

For all the criticism about the failure of the educational system to provide a good education to even the white middle class child who finishes high school and goes to college, the greater concern should be focused on such examples as Benjamin Franklin High School where, out of 3000 children, mainly black and Puerto Rican, only 38 received an academic diploma to go to college.

Witness

Rabbi Daniel L. Davis, Director, New York Federation of Reform Synagogues

Local communities should be involved and participate in the educational process but they are not competent to decide matters involving the technical application of educational practice any more than they would be qualified to determine how a hospital should be run. Teacher achievement will not necessarily flow out of community control. One of the reasons why some teachers are unable to teach effectively is that they spend much of their time being a policeman to keep the children under control.

The New York Federation of Reform Synagogues favors the concept of community participation and a program of decentralization that will achieve improved education for all children while safeguarding the rights and opportunities of teachers and supervisors.

In view of the confused moral climate and dissension which make education difficult beyond comprehension, something should be done, perhaps by the Commission, toward bringing communities

together for a discussion and education on ways of working together to improve the life of our communities.

There is some evidence that community control could lead to the creation of new ghettos. Ghettos, whether black or white, should not be established as a norm of life in our city.

Witness

Ellen Lurie, Training Director, United Bronx Parents Association

The UBPA, which receives some anti-poverty funds, has conducted a comparison study of the twelve best and the twelve worst schools in the Bronx. The statistical investigation covered reading scores, per pupil costs, physical facilities, average class sizes, school registers, number of IGC classes, turnover of supervisory staff, teaching staff, graduation data, etc. The results of the study demonstrated a significant and inescapable correlation between schools with large black and Puerto Rican enrollments and negative statistics.

Of the 12 schools with the best reading scores, 11 were 80 per cent white or more. All 12 of the bottom schools had more than 80 per cent black enrollment. Of the top 12, only two were over 40 years old. Of the bottom 12, ten were more than 40 years old. None of the top ten were over-utilized, ten of the bottom ones were terribly over-crowded. The comparisons were equally stark in every category examined.

The UBPA has conducted many other surveys which substantiate the conclusion that black and Puerto Rican students get less money, less attention, poorer educations and worst

learning conditions. These figures have been presented to Board of Education officials with no effect. The Board is insensitive to the disparities between ghetto schools and the rest of the system.

Witness

Blanche Lewis, President, United Parents Associations of New York City

The United Parents Associations rejects absolute community control but believes in a decentralization plan which will permit greater participation by parents, will have sufficient power on the local level to assure accountability and represents a parent electorate. There should be checks and balances on curriculum standards so that minimum levels are maintained. The central board should set the budget framework, mandating about 70 per cent of expenditures with the balance left to control of the local board. The central board should control construction and zoning but in consultation with the local board. Minor repairs would be administered by the local board.

The Board of Education does not respond satisfactorily to the needs of the communities and fails to carry out its own programs in a way that they might succeed. Open enrollment was sabotaged by the Board and the remedial reading programs have been plagued by professional non-cooperation.

Teachers union contracts should be negotiated centrally with each district entitled to representation on the negotiating committee.

Witness

Dr. Burton Zwiebach, Assistant Professor of Political Science,
Queens College and City University

The pluralist American society is based on organization of power. The system ignores the powerless. Regional power, such as community control, is consonant with the concepts of a pluralistic society and participatory democracy. Where Italians, Irish and Jews used the ward system to attain political potency, the black and Puerto Rican communities are employing a similar mechanism in a new form of community organization.

The potential for student self-image improvement is the most promising variable in community control. Studies indicate that a positive self-image will help the child to learn.

Decentralization will not create fractionalization but may reflect a condition already existing. Decentralization might ameliorate tensions by giving black and Puerto Rican people pride and confidence with less frustration.

Witness

Maurice J. Goldbloom, Ad Hoc Committee to Defend the Right
to Teach

Community control in much of the United States has meant a form of subjection to local tyrants and busybodies. Teachers are protected from this only by the merit system with its tenure and trade unionism. Any attack upon tenure or unionism is a threat to the integrity of the teaching profession. Teachers may be removed for cause but they are entitled to all rights of due process.

Course requirements for teachers should be abolished and

replaced by examinations of adequate basic education and knowledge of the subject matter they intend to teach. They should also be required to serve a guided apprenticeship.

Curriculum should be revised to include the contributions of all ethnic groups. Separate courses on particular groups run the risk of polarizing relationships adversely.

Local boards should not have the power to take action directly, but should only bring complaints to the attention of the professionals.

School districts should be large and diffused enough that different groups will balance each other.

Hope for integration must not be abandoned. Despite its apparent failure, other ways should be sought for achieving it.

SIXTH DAY - DECEMBER 9, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

David H. Litter, Vice Chairman
Theophilus Lewis

Witness

Rosalie Stutz, Chairman EQUAL

The New York City school system is now solely accountable to the United Federation of Teachers. As it now stands, there are no elected officials, no accountability and no democracy in the school system. Decentralization must be accompanied by total local control, each local board having the full powers of the present Board of Education.

Certain personnel in the school system must be dismissed. Much of the staff must be trained and new techniques introduced. These problems must be worked out on a community level, not on a city-wide basis. If a centralized coordinating body is needed, the individual local boards should form it and decide what functions they want it to handle.

Witness

John J. O'Neill, Vice President, United Federation of Teachers

There will be no peace or order in the school system until black and Puerto Rican children and parents are given power in the control of the system. The fatal flaw in the recent strike settlement was not in its terms but in the way it was imposed upon the community. No settlements or proposals are going to work if they are imposed by the white establishment. Black and Puerto Rican parents must be accorded the dignity and self-respect

which results from being involved in decisions affecting their lives and the lives of their children. The UFT should enter into direct negotiations immediately with the local demonstration boards to resolve the problems raised.

There should be 30 districts plus the three experimental districts. Each district should be governed by a community-elected board having the same powers as the central board. The union should negotiate separate agreements with each district. The central Board of Education should be dismantled because it is no longer relevant to the needs of the black and Puerto Rican communities which make up a majority in the school system.

Witness

Simon Beagle, Educational Consultant, American Federation of Teachers

The American Federation of Teachers is not against decentralization but is not for complete control. The frustration of ghetto parents is understandable but there are other solutions available.

The More Effective Schools program of the AFT should be expanded as rapidly as possible. If it is not expanded it will die. The 21 MES schools in New York City are located primarily in ghetto districts. The program, which is receiving support from parents, teachers and pupils because of the hope it is creating, is based upon smaller classes, specially trained teachers, an educational curriculum designed to meet the particular needs of children from low-income families, adequate physical facilities and maximum feasible participation of parents. This

enriched program costs but \$500 per pupil. Ninety per cent of the cost is funded by the Federal Government. At least 300 additional elementary schools could be brought under the program.

SEVENTH DAY - December 10, 1968

Hearing Commissioners:

William H. Booth, Chairman
David H. Litter, Vice Chairman

Witness

Dr. John Morsell, Assistant Executive Director,
National Association for the Advancement of
Colored People

Reconstruction of the New York City school system is long overdue. The NAACP, with the concurrence of the national office is in favor of some form of decentralized local control of community schools. The NAACP will support any decentralization plan which meets the following standards:

1. It must protect teacher security and due process.
2. It must not conflict with integration.
"Cross-fertilization" with other school districts should be encouraged.
3. A residual central authority must remain to guarantee minimum standards as to curriculum, class size, budgeting and other general factors.

Although integration has not been successful, other alternatives such as educational parks and re-districting

should be tried.

Different methods and different motivations must be used in teaching disadvantaged children. Teachers should be paid according to their ability to teach.

There are too few Negro teachers and administrators in the system. Qualifications and tests should be amended so that the teacher selection process can be speeded up.

Witness

Elliot Shapiro, District Superintendent, District 3,
Board of Education

Educational institutions throughout the country find themselves in disfavor mainly because of an over-defensiveness in the face of criticism. Even when the need for change is obvious, people who are poor, or discriminated against, or both, find it is impossible to make an impact on the system. The tendency of the poor to save their energies for those things they can achieve leads to a sort of apathy that is difficult to overcome. There is a question whether the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community is as involved as it should be.

Decentralization and community control are necessary. Power must be wrenched away from the Establishment, but unless there is the fullest of community participation the integrity of the power-takers will be called into question.

We are in a new era of politics which obligates

leaders having charismatic qualities to involve the poor so that they can get things accomplished. Much of the financing for quality education in the cities must come from the Federal Government. It is only by the support of the people that this assistance can be obtained.

Witness

Dr. David Rogers, Author of "110 Livingston Street;" Associate Professor of Sociology and Management, New York University School of Business Administration.

Although New York City was the first city in the nation to make policy statements on the psychological and sociological consequences of segregation suffered by black and white students, every integration program of the Board of Education has been characterized by inaction and non-implementation. With an expense budget exceeding one billion dollars the Board appears to turn out welfare clients from schools in ghetto areas.

It would appear that the New York City schools have failed because they need more money, need better curricula, could use better planning, have pressures working against the system (often created by the Board), have failed to recruit competent teachers and because of many other complex problems. But even if these conditions were corrected, the schools would continue to fail because of the vast leaderless bureaucracy which absorbs the efforts and idealism

of any activists. Radical Decentralization is essential.

The compensatory programs supposedly conducted in ghetto schools to make up for inequality in the society are a fallacy in practice. Studies show that white schools maintain advantages in class size, utilization of facilities, class time, salaries, experience and most other important factors.

Examination procedures by the Board of Examiners (contrary to previous testimony) have not really been improved. An "inbreeding" tendency is still strong and discrimination continues to be practised against minority applicants. The examination system is dominated by educational psychologists who want preciseness to the extent that they measure the hell out of irrelevant factors but fail to attempt measurement of attitude, sensitivity and understanding.

There has long been an informal sort of decentralization resulting from noncompliance and defiance of the central board's authority on major policy decisions. The situation should be reversed so that decisions are originated on the local level.

A five-district decentralization plan would be disaster. Even the 15-district plan of the UFT would result in units too large to administer properly.

Witness

Pam Levin, Education Chairman, Citizens'
Committee for the Children of New York

The Citizens' Committee is concerned about children's rights and the effect of the present school crisis upon the attitudes of children. A large number of children are not being educated because of the attitudes and unwillingness of school administrators to innovate or implement new policies.

The concept of community control is at the heart of the American public school system. Laymen must determine the goals of education and the policies calculated to achieve them. Professional educators must implement these policies. To be effective programs should be carried out in an atmosphere of responsibility and accountability.

Educators will have to now cope with the angry and hostile attitudes of children who feel they are being betrayed in the present conflict. Their ability to perform in school is a grave problem. The school system has the obligation to develop positive attitudes in these children toward the school, their community and the world around them.

Community control is an important factor in improving the quality of education for children in New York City.

Witness

Vine Deloria, Jr., National Congress of American Indians (Statement presented by Carla Blakey, Young American Indian Council)

Today we are witnessing a profound turn of events in education, the result of which has been to dig up obscure figures of various minority groups and highlight them as if they alone had rolled the stone from the sepulcher. People who never amounted to a tinker's damn in life are suddenly bigger than life.

While we are tempted to look at a minority's past in terms of the great men it produced, we will discover in the process that the issues which shaped their lives, that shaped their opportunities and that drove them to assert their individuality cannot be understood except in terms of a white history which serves to justify a mysterious and unjustifiable betrayal.

Instead of studying minority group history we should rather press for teaching of a view of life, for an educational process, that creates the ability to examine life and its processes with insight and understanding.

Witness

Ralph King, Director, Brooklyn Region, National Conference of Christians and Jews

Under the present New York City educational structure quality education for many children is not possible. A

decentralized plan is urged that will guarantee to local communities the power to make decisions affecting the education of their children. This power should be shared at the direct level by the local school professional staff, parents and the community. The schools should be accountable to the local boards as well as to city and state authorities and teacher rights should be fully protected.

The NCCJ recommends the creation of at least 33 districts in order to open up the fullest opportunity for all citizens. All decisions concerning redistricting, personnel, budget, local school boards, or the composition of the local electorate should be shared by city and state authorities as well as the local community.

There should be intensified "sensitivity" exposure for teachers, students and parents. Teacher training institutions must develop effective sensitivity training programs. Greater efforts must be made in supplementing intergroup relations training for present teachers. Maximum effort should be directed toward the recruitment of minority group personnel. Students and parents should be able to see black and Puerto Rican teachers at all levels in the school system.

Witness

Dr. June Nash, Anthropologist, New York
University

The rich traditions and a knowledge of the historic struggles of American Indian peoples should be brought into the curriculum.

All children need images and models which they can identify with and respond to.

The ethnic or racial identification of teachers is not so important as their outlook.

Witness

Bernice L. Cornyetz, Teacher, French and Spanish,
Brandeis High School

Undergraduate and graduate training does not prepare a teacher adequately for teaching in a school where 80 per cent of the students are black or Puerto Rican. Language teachers should have a knowledge of Puerto Rican, Dominican, Haitian and Cuban culture and history to supplement the French and Spanish they teach.

Insight into the differences in cultural values, attitudes and history of the pupils we teach is essential in the sensitivity training of non-minority teachers.

The necessity for decentralization is axiomatic. Ghettoized black and Puerto Rican parents view their children as the instruments of their own liberation from the economic and psychological servitude that has been

their lot. They need to take an active role in decision-making affecting the education of their children.

A union of public employees does not have the right to define and decide what decentralization proposal is the "correct one" for New York City. Civil employees have an obligation to provide the services defined by the community. Non-professionals should make the decision based on consultation with professionals.

Witness

Peter Steinberg, Teacher, Brandeis High School

The minority communities of this city have finally risen up to demand a confrontation with that structure which has done its best to destroy their young.

The only explanation for an educational system that fails so completely to educate black and Puerto Rican children is the prejudice and racism built into the bone and marrow of the system. Teacher training, the overwhelming proportion of white teachers, the textbook omissions of minority groups, the failure to include courses in minority group culture, the refusal to examine the failures of our economic and social system, all lead to a basically prejudiced teaching staff. Much of the opposition to community control by teachers arises from their refusal to face a challenge to their dearly treasured liberal images.

Community control is an opportunity to destroy the

existing status quo and must be used or we may have no future opportunity and no future domestic peace. White communities in New York City have enjoyed virtual community control without formal legal recognition because they were the same people who did the teaching and manned the Board of Education bureaucracy. Communities must be given full control over funds distributed in their district and a free hand in developing new curricula and teaching methods. They must control school construction funds.

EIGHTH DAY - December 11, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

William H. Booth, Chairman
Gilbert Colgate, Jr.
Kenneth Drew
Jerome M. Kay
Theophilus Lewis

Witness

Herbert Kahn, Queens Council for Better Housing and Community Development

The Council supports decentralization and Community control as devices for accomplishing quality education. Separation is not of benefit to black and white society whereas all will benefit from integration. But even if one fears that community control will develop into separatism, he has no right to impose his will upon a black Community that has experienced white opposition to integration.

Black leadership developed in black communities can be even more responsible than the white leadership which has controlled the school system for years.

A decentralization plan should include no less than 34 districts. There should be no less than 15 members on each local board with a representation of parents and other members of the community. There should be a 3-5 member Central board of professionals, not appointed by the mayor, with restricted powers. The central board would be responsible for central purchasing, coordination and review of city-wide programs and research. Under no circumstances should discretion be taken away from the local boards on the use of funds allocated to them.

Witness

Dan Wavne, Private Citizen

The problem is sociological rather than pedagogical. The thrust should be toward community participation rather than community domination.

Society wrongly places the burden on the school system for teaching children from reprehensible homes where there is a high rate of illegitimacy. These children may be educable but it is not a question of attacking the educational structure. Instead, the home life of these children must be changed.

Teachers should not be attacked but should be respected as they were in early immigrant homes. White children have been able to go through the New York City school system, despite a few bad teachers, and have obtained a good education.

Witness

Oliver Pamsey, Chairman, Education Committee, New York City Council Against Poverty (Statement presented by Lisa Liebert, C.A.P. staff)

Over the past decade, based on the acknowledged fact that black and Puerto Rican educational opportunities were less than equal, minority groups petitioned the Board of Education time and again to integrate the school system with the hope of equalizing educational opportunity. The Board's bureaucracy sabotaged integration and quality education.

Increased ghettoization coupled with the dynamics of self-determination recognized by the Economic Opportunity Act and the Civil Disorders Commission report have sparked the move toward community controlled schools and decentralization.

The three demonstration projects were designed to give community control a chance to upgrade local school systems. The

Board of Education with the help of major power blocs such as the UFT and CSA engineered the failure of the project. The Board must now systematically delegate its rights and privileges to local school boards if we are to upgrade education for all children in New York City.

The Council Against Poverty, after hearing representatives from the 26 poverty areas, has adopted the following position:

1. The 26 poverty areas, subject to approval of the residents in each area, should be the basis of educational districts.
2. All persons over 16 years of age should have the right to vote in elections in the district where they reside or have a child attending school. 75 per cent of the board members must be local public school parents and no more than 10 per cent may be non-residents.
3. Teachers with State certification should be hired by the local board after a personal interview.
4. District superintendents may freely transfer teachers within their district and may transfer outside of the district by agreement with other district superintendents.
5. The local board should have the power to determine questions of tenure under appropriate due process safeguards.
6. Teachers may be dismissed or suspended in accord with State guidelines before duly selected trial examiners with rights of appeal.
7. Local boards should have primary authority for courses, content and examinations subject to State guidelines.

8. Allocations of tax-levy funds, capital budget funds and special funds such as Title I should be on the basis of need.

Witness

Martha B. Bernard, Vice President, New York Association for Brain Injured Children

Special services for all mentally and physically handicapped children must be administered centrally although facilities should be located in familiar local environments. These programs require specialized and unusual attention because 70% or more of the handicapped have other complications.

The educational program for handicapped children will not be hurt by decentralization so long as sufficient power is left to the central board with respect to educational problems of the handicapped.

Teacher training is inadequate for the handicapped and there is a great need for paraprofessionals. The handicapped children programs would benefit from more community awareness of the problems because community pressure is necessary for obtaining better services and more funds.

Witness

Emanuel Muravchic, Executive Director, Jewish Labor Committee

It is not possible to provide quality education to children who have been victims of discrimination and poverty without an expenditure of much more funds. Educational programs such as the More Effective Schools program are needed.

The present concentration on the issues of decentralization and community control is a cruel hoax. It is a hoax to state,

overtly or covertly, that the failure of the educational system is not economic, cultural or social but is the product of evil-intentioned racist persons in the school system. It is also a hoax to say that a local board, by taking over can solve or face problems not successfully faced by other groups and individuals who have been coping with these problems.

Parent participation should be encouraged, but control by political or ethnic centered groups over standards, course contents, teaching methods or teachers' rights has no demonstrated educational value to deprived children.

"Teacher accountability" is a euphemistic way of saying that the failure of the student in the classroom is a product of racist teachers.

The shortage of funds needed for improving education must be made up as well as possible by greater variety of experimentation with teaching methods.

Witness

Lloyd S. Mapp, Education Coordinator, East New York Community Corporation

Recent studies show that teachers are an important motivating influence on children. Standards need to be developed for measuring teacher expectations of students and student motivation. Teachers are not the cause of all underachievement, but where it is found that they contribute remedial action must be taken. Teachers should understand the ethnic background of the people they teach. This should be a mandated requirement in teachers' colleges.

The school curriculum should be revised so that the ghetto child can relate to his reading needs as well as his image needs

thereby ameliorating the child's hostility as he grows up.

Most areas other than the ghetto areas have community control by way of an unwritten law that allows them to get rid of teachers and make other choices with the cooperation of the system.

Some protections for teachers are valid but they should not expect to dictate where they will teach.

Witness

Jeffrey Mackler, Member, Executive Board, New Coalition Party of the United Federation of Teachers

The New Coalition supports the right of communities to control their schools.

99.9 per cent of teachers would like to teach and are no more racist than the rest of our society, but most teachers do not believe they have the qualifications to teach black and Puerto Rican children. Teachers pretend to teach and are instructed to pass students who never attend class. Even a properly motivated teacher cannot motivate a student who knows that there is only 75-cent-an-hour employment waiting for him after he finishes school. Most students after 9 years in the system still cannot read or write.

The UFT could ally itself with community demands without sacrificing legitimate union concerns. Decentralization will not weaken the union even if bargaining must include representation from local boards. In past years the UFT has had the support of black and Puerto Rican parents. It should regain that support and work to get more education funds and to make needed changes in society.

Witness

Gretchen (Mrs. Jeffrev) Mackler, Elementary School Teacher

The greatest problem in P.S. 115, a predominantly Spanish-speaking school, is that only 2 of the 60 teachers can speak Spanish. Classes are too large also.

Much assistance could be had from using Spanish-speaking mothers as teacher aides. Experiments should be tried with teaching by English half a day and by Spanish the other half.

Pre-school programs such as Head Start seem to make children more socially advanced.

Witness

Rose Claire Jones, Associated with the Model Cities Program

It is very difficult for white teachers to teach black children. Teachers from the community are more effective because they can relate directly to the child.

Under decentralization a better curriculum can be developed for the ghetto child which will relate to the child's heritage and the culture of his family.

NINTH DAY - December 12, 1968

Hearing Commissioners:

William H. Booth, Chairman
Eleanor Clark French
Jerome M. Kay

Witness

Dr. Ruth Radvany, Chairman, Mathematics
Department, Julia Richman High School

Under the decentralization plan the Board of Education should allocate funds to be used by teachers for contacting parents regarding the purchase of supplies for their children, assuring that homework assignments are done and discussing poor attendance or class performance. Many parents at present have no idea of what is going on in the schools and provision has not been made for informing them. Funds should also be made available to enable the better students to be paid for tutoring their classmates.

Motivation in school must be supplemented by motivation at home. This will be encouraged by a parent out-reach program. Parents and teachers should be able to make a better joint effort under decentralization.

There should be no rigid standards for teacher selection. Competence can be developed in the system.

Witness

Jerry Latzky, Chairman, Riverdale Parents
for Effective Education

The Riverdale parents group kept its schools open during the strike with the support of much of the community. This is an example of the kind of action community parents can take to "fight City Hall" when their children's education is involved.

Witness

Roderick MacKenzie, Teacher, Jamaica High
School

Decentralization would be a disaster for New York City because it leads to segregation instead of integration.

A school system reflects society. It is ridiculous to change the school system without changing society. Integration would be better served by securing equality in housing and employment. Existing laws against inequality should be enforced.

Decentralization and community control will not solve either our social or academic problems. Smaller class sizes, like the More Effective Schools program, are the basic answer to academic problems. The United Federation of Teachers has contributed greatly to reduce class sizes by negotiating better contracts and working conditions for teachers.

A massive infusion and redistribution of money is needed.

Provisions should be made for easy recall of local board members who are incompetent, racist, mentally ill, etc. Local elections should not be valid unless at least 50 per cent of the parents vote. Teachers' tenure rights should be retained.

Witness

Dr. Max Wolff, Director, Project "Operation Educational Park" at Center for Urban Education

The educational park is an answer to the question of how to fight segregation while improving education.

About 30,000 children would attend one park. There would be small elementary school units of 250-270 pupils, intermediate school units of 600-700 pupils and high school units of 1200-1500 pupils. The educational park should project fingers of nearby schools into the ghettos.

The educational park would be more efficient in that it would enable outstanding teachers to teach other teachers without giving up the teaching of pupils themselves. Educational parks would relate the public school to the community by centralizing locally while decentralizing on a citywide basis. Policy-making participation by parents would be more feasible.

The educational park planned for Co-op City will

be a segregated park and will therefore violate the purpose of the concept. A suburban enclave has been created which will form new ghettos.

The demands of Negroes and Puerto Ricans for quality education and union demands for security are both justified but there is no necessary conflict between the two.

Witness

John M. Lawrence, Chairman, Federation of
Americans Against Israeli Racism

The Commission on Human Rights should not have excluded charges of racism from the present hearings. Three points should be made.

1. The legislature should declare a state of emergency in the city schools. The reason for the crisis in education is the lopsided representation of Jews in the ranks of teacher and supervisor due to "Jewish ethnic gangsterism."

2. Funds should be set aside to phase elderly and incompetent Jewish teachers out of the school system on a pension basis.

(The witness never reached his third point because the Chairman adjourned the hearing when the witness insisted repeatedly upon continuing a diatribe against Jews.)

Witness

Arnold Webb, President, New York Association
of Black School Supervisors and Administrators

The NYABSSA strongly supports the concept of community control whereby interested and informed professional educators work closely with and are responsive to the school community. Together, the school personnel and the community must work towards the achievement of the only real objective - the improvement of instruction in order to provide children with the necessary tools to become functioning members of our society.

Each principal, in cooperation with his local school board and district superintendent, should systematically review in a meaningful format his school curriculum, instructional program, staff development, school-community relations, pupil achievement and school administration. This should involve a planning report at the beginning of the school year with periodic progress reports made available to the local board and an opportunity for public hearings on matters important to the community.

All teachers and supervisors are entitled to due process and job security. All teachers and supervisors should be rated under a set of criteria designed to measure effectiveness on the job.

The black community no longer accepts desegregation as a solution to the problems of educating their children. The thrust is now toward quality neighborhood schools under

direct community control.

More must be done toward showing the true roles of black people in American history. Local school boards under a decentralized system might provide better stimuli to publishers to provide decent textbooks.

Specifically, NYABSSA supports changes in the New York State Education Law which would provide for:

1. Approximately 30 to 35 local school districts.
2. Elected local school boards with staggered terms of office to provide for continuity. (9 to 13 members)
3. Local school boards to accede to all powers and duties, with respect to the schools within its boundaries, of the Board of Education including the right to appoint a local superintendent.
4. The transfer to the local board of all employees serving within the schools in the local district.
5. The abolition of the Board of Examiners and reliance upon state certification for the appointment and promotion of pedagogical personnel.
6. The abolition of the City board of education and its replacement by a three man paid commission of whom two shall be appointed by the Mayor and one by the Governor.
7. The operation of all special high schools, special programs of city-wide enrollment, and programs for handicapped pupils by the City Education Commission.

8. Continuing and systematic evaluation of teacher classroom performance by supervisors who are in turn accountable to the district superintendent.

Witness

Harold Dicks, Education Chairman, Bronx Chapter, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The Bronx NAACP represents every year an average of 50 parents whose children have been expelled or suspended. Time and time again teachers and administrators exhibit an ignorance and a callousness to the welfare of black students. In many cases (reports turned over to CCHR) there appears to have been outright discrimination.

Only through community control will the school system be made responsible to the students and their parents.

Witness

Dr. Daniel Dodson, Human Relations and Community Study Center, New York University School of Education

There is general agreement that most public education in the large inner city school is sterile. Many panaceas have been tried. These range from compensatory education to efforts to achieve local control. The Coleman Report found generally that the amount spent for education makes little difference if other factors are

held constant.

Inherently, the reason for this sterility is in educational theory and practice. People learn what they live - not what they are taught. One learns to cope with the issues presented to him in his life space. The learning theory which must be developed is that of how to restructure relations so that people are caught up in encounters which are different in order that they will be required to learn new things for survival. Teachers will have to be trained as change agents rather than as mere purveyors of erudition.

The Bundy study reached the conclusion that schools should be turned over to local communities and let the minority communities restructure education so their children will not be psychologically destroyed by the dominant white society. The creation of many autonomous districts will create more problems than it solves. Community control will break education up into apartheid patterns in these inner cities:

1. The whole trend of education as well as other aspects of service is toward regional and national norms.
2. It further fragments a community whose greatest need is consensus.
3. It destroys the school system as a viable city-wide system.
4. It would substitute de facto segregation by

districts for de facto segregation by schools, taking us back to the Plessy v. Ferguson era of presumed "separate but equal."

5. Autonomous school districts cannot be adequately staffed in minority communities.

6. Autonomous districts could not cope with population shifts.

7. Severe decentralization would return curriculum making to a tribal level. Each group would try to develop a curriculum to teach the lore of his tribe.

8. Such separation in education would deprive the Negro and Puerto Rican populations the leverage with which to secure change. New York City has a pretty good school system outside the ghetto areas. If they do not have the threat of having to share with the minorities, what makes one think they will be willing to support additional efforts for education?

This foray into the defense of a school system in New York should not be interpreted as a defense of its performances with inner city children. Neither does it mean opposition to some decentralization. Some reformation of the structure is mandatory, but the system should not be dismembered in favor of the local control formula.

Witness

Joseph Harris, Director, Educational Services,
Association for the Help of Retarded Children
(Statement presented by Mrs. Elizabeth Pendler)

The AHRC does not express approval or opposition to any of the decentralization proposals.

If special education services to the handicapped are not to receive a very serious setback, individual districts must not become the sole arbiters of their responsibility in the area of special education. There will be many pressures upon districts for a variety of services by parents of all children who will by far outnumber parents of the retarded in a particular district. If the rights of these handicapped youngsters are indeed to be protected, provision must be made to assign to the Centralized Bureaus (through the Central Board of Education) to organize, house, implement and administer the programs and services for handicapped children. As far as the retarded are concerned, the AHRC firmly supports the continuation of the Bureau for Children with Retarded Mental Development as a city-wide agency.

Witness

Peter Reilly, Teacher, Junior High School 142,
Bronx

All parties must share the blame for the present school crisis, not just teachers and UFT.

The idea of decentralization has now become

community control. If the teacher does not control the class there is no learning. If the principal does not control the school there is no learning. Most of the community districts are mediocre, dominated by special interests and segregated.

Community control will give white racists an opportunity to dominate many New York City districts.

TENTH DAY - December 13, 1968

Hearing Commissioners:

William H. Booth, Chairman
David H. Litter, Vice Chairman
Jerome M. Kay

Witness

Marcus Tenner, Director, Lower East Side Community Corporation

In New York City where black and Puerto Rican students are a majority of the school population, they get further behind each year they attend school.

Under the present centralized system, even if perfect programs are formulated by the Board of Education, there are too many levels that a program must sift through before it gets to the level of impact. Even if the program survives distortion, the time consumed in planning it and putting it into operation can render it irrelevant.

There is no valid purpose served today by civil service or union organization. Civil service was useful at the turn of the century for eliminating graft, etc. Similarly, unions were at one time useful to people at the bottom of the economic ladder. The chief functions of unions and civil service today are to create "no-jobs."

Decentralization can help to overcome these faults as well as make the educational institution account to the people in the democratic tradition.

Community control can accomplish improved education as well as desegregation might have done.

Although there will have to be some central control over New York City tax funds, each local board should have control over texts and teachers.

Witness

Rev. C. Herbert Oliver, Chairman, Ocean Hill-Brownsville Governing Board;
Pastor, Westminster Bethany United Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn

There should be deep concern about the gross violation of human rights in the recent settlement imposed upon the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district. The terms of the settlement were in themselves demeaning; brute power was used to carry out the settlement; and community-elected leaders were replaced by appointed puppets.

There is an inherent human right for parents to educate their children. The Board of Education has no right to exist unless the parents want it to exist.

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville demonstration project has not been a true example of an experimental school program. It was supposed to have one year to experiment, but has not had one moment to experiment.

There may be a necessity for a central board with some responsibility, but it is most important that there be accountability of the central board to the communities. Decentralization may not be needed for all districts. There can be some variety. But the local boards should decide the degree of control they want to assert.

About 25 percent of the parents voted in the Governing Board election. More would have participated but the election steering committee could not get a list of parents from the Board of Education.

Witness

Dr. Abraham Duker, Professor, History and Social Institutions, Yeshiva University

The Jewish community is afraid that decentralization and community control will be used against Jewish teachers. The recent rash of rumors and charges has aggravated these fears. Jewish teachers feel they are being put in

a category of second class citizenship. Teachers should have the right to teach and race should not be a consideration.

Decentralization should take place on an experimental basis, not with all districts at once and not by fiat. We must be cautious that we do not divide people on racial or ethnic lines.

Textbooks should be written so that they fairly represent all people. Jewish culture is not accurately reflected in many textbooks. This contributes to anti-Semitism.

Smaller units are not necessarily more democratic than large ones. Small units can operate undemocratically because of the danger of intimidation. Democracy does not have to commit suicide.

Neighborhood democracy is not so good because people have too many other things to do. Atomization of our society contributes to polarization.

Witness

Mary Montgomery, Industrial Arts Teacher

A complete and fundamental overhaul of the educational system is needed. There is no proper teacher training in New York City and no teaching of black culture in the city schools.

Witness

Albert Shanker, President, United Federation of Teachers

Decentralization has no educational significance whatsoever. It may leave the state of education the same or it may, at worse, create chaos. Community control has no effect on the performance of children. The United States has had decentralization since the public school system began. In the suburbs and in high income districts such as Riverdale there is no difference in scholastic achievement between centralized and decentralized school systems. In Great Neck, which is a low income area operating under a decentralized

system, the children perform as poorly as they do in New York City. Socio-economic levels determine scholastic performance.

Decentralization without additional funds to improve the lives of people in the low income district is no good. It will simply be a cruel hoax and a damn lie. It is not a magic formula.

While decentralization is educationally irrelevant, it is necessary because the school system is simply too big to be operated by a central authority and because of its democratic aspects.

Community control is not decentralization but secessionism. No school district should decide whether teachers stay or not. If the central board issues one set of orders and the local board another, this constitutes secessionism. The United Federation of Teachers cannot live with this.

Too many districts would make administrative costs too high.

We need the possibility of integration. Our high schools, for instance, are fairly well integrated, and we should not throw away what we have to create apartheid in the school system.

There is a talent problem. Small districts do not have the talent to provide good education.

The trend in the country today, as well as in Canada, is towards centralization.

In smaller school districts, there is a great possibility of small groups of extremists taking over by violence, as the recent experience in New York demonstrates.

We do not know what the perfect number of districts is, and we should start with a few. It is hard to put Humpty Dumpty back together again once he has fallen.

Local school boards should be elected, there should be no appointed

members. Perhaps there should be proportional representation on the boards because of the danger of one ethnic group dominating. The electorate should be confined to the parents who have children in the schools. At the present time, it is too easy for groups within the communities to dominate the electoral process, such as anti-poverty and political clubs which leave parents voiceless.

Personnel standards should be city-wide, although the present system should be derigidified. Teachers should be initially assigned from the central board and local boards should have the right to get rid of non-functioning teachers. Performance and credentials should both be important in affecting teachers. Local boards should determine their effectiveness.

The Urban Coalition is somewhat hypocritical in backing decentralization when the industrialists who comprise it still pay low wages to black and Puerto Rican workers.

Teachers are not completely to blame for the failure of education in the city. We have no real system of measuring teacher ability by objective and not subjective standards. A computerized system should be installed for evaluating the performance of teachers and students in low income districts.

A mechanism is needed where parents can complain about teachers not as professionals but as civil servants. The United Federation of Teachers has proposed this but has gotten no action. We need a common curriculum with flexibility to meet local needs. There are extremist tendencies in some communities which if unchecked, will hamper the teaching process.

Decentralization needs a strong central authority. Decentralization is not hindered by the United Federation of Teachers but by people who do not obey the Board of Education, the Mayor, the superintendent of schools, etc. We must stop operating on a riot psychology or the central authority will lack guts.

ELEVENTH DAY - December 24, 1968

Hearing Commissioners

William H. Booth, Chairman
Rabbi Harry Halpern
Jerome M. Kay

Witness

David A. Schulte, Chairman, New York Board, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (Appearing with Mr. Schulte was Morris S. Sass, Director of the New York Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League)

The ADL is unalterably opposed to the concept of "community control" as this concept has developed in the recent experience in New York City and as this concept is being espoused. Such "community control" is alien to our form of government since it would place the whim and wishes of a locality over that of the State and the City.

The ADL supports school decentralization which would grant to local communities greater power and authority in regard to specific and defined functions, duties and responsibilities and which will bring about great and more meaningful participation and involvement of parents and other citizens in local communities.

There is a need for sensitivity training; for understanding of the mores of the community and for insights into the children's backgrounds and needs. Teachers must also be trained in the technical skills of teaching and must be knowledgeable in subject matter. There is need for special efforts to increase the numbers of qualified minority group members in the school system. To protect the interests of the children, it is essential that the merit system for the selection of teachers

and supervisors be retained. The school system must operate without quotas for different religious and racial groups in its staff.

Centralized guidance of the curriculum is necessary with broad latitude for experimentation and innovation on the local district level. Teacher training and curriculum development must serve to promote amity and understanding amongst all ethnic, racial and religious groups and to promote integration in our society.

Teacher salaries, teacher hiring and a textbook formula should be centrally controlled, but adequate money should be allocated to the local boards for experimentation. The community should be consulted with regard to teacher standards.

The ADL favors an elected local community board composed of 11 members, 8 elected by the parents and 3 appointed by the mayor from the district. The city-wide board should be appointive only.

Local boards should have some say in the award of construction contracts regarding compliance with equal employment laws. The City should flex its muscles in contract compliance. There is no enforcement at present. CCHR should look into the situation with the cooperation of advisory councils from the community.

The "image" factor for selecting teachers has some validity, but havoc would be created in our society if it were used as the determining factor. Other means of image development should be found.